

CIRCUIT COURTS

Budget Summary						FTE Position Summary				
Fund	2012-13 Adjusted Base	Request		2013-15 Change Over Base Year Doubled		2012-13	Request		2014-15 Over 2012-13	
		2013-14	2014-15	Amount	%		2013-14	2014-15	Number	%
GPR	\$96,348,500	\$101,622,600	\$101,814,900	\$10,740,500	5.6%	527.00	527.00	527.00	0.00	0.0%
PR	232,700	232,700	232,700	0	0.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0
TOTAL	\$96,581,200	\$101,855,300	\$102,047,600	\$10,740,500	5.6%	527.00	527.00	527.00	0.00	0.0%

Major Request Items

1. STANDARD BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

GPR	- \$3,695,000
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Request adjustments to the base budget for: (a) full funding of continuing position salaries and fringe benefits (-\$1,846,500 annually); and (b) full funding of lease and directed moves costs (-\$1,000 annually).

2. NEW CIRCUIT COURT FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

GPR	\$10,013,400
GPR-Lapse	- \$4,648,600

Request creation of a new Circuit Court Financial Support program, which would replace the existing Circuit Court Support Program (CCSP) and the guardian ad litem (GAL) costs program. Repeal of the current distribution formula for CCSP and GAL payments and create statutory language for the new program, including that the Director of State Courts Office would distribute payments to counties on a semi-annual basis (January 1st and July 1st) based on the following formula, similar to the current GAL costs formula:

a. The amount determined by dividing the number of circuit court branches in the county by the total number of circuit court branches in the state and multiplying that result by one-third of the total amount to be paid;

b. The amount determined by dividing the judicial need for the county (judges and court commissioners) as measured by the Director of State Court's weighed caseload methodology for the previous calendar year, by the total judicial officer need for all counties and multiplying the result by one-third of the total amount to be paid; and

c. The amount determined by dividing the amount of court fees, fines, forfeitures,

and surcharges collected in the county in the previous calendar year by the total amount of court fees, fines, forfeitures, and surcharges collected in the state in the previous calendar year and multiplying that result by one-third of the total amount to be paid.

Request the following funding adjustments for the program:

a. Delete the existing appropriations for CCSP and GAL costs, and transfer the funding from these appropriations to the new sum sufficient appropriation (\$23,243,300 annually);

b. Provide an additional \$5,006,700 annually to the new appropriation. The request states that because of the new formula distribution, "at current funding levels some counties would receive more and some counties would receive less than they would under current law. To hold counties harmless in transitioning to this new program and provide most counties with an increase in the amount they receive, an additional \$7,331,000 GPR would be needed annually."

c. Request the elimination of the annual lapse requirement under 2011 Act 32 of \$1,855,200 from the CCSP appropriation and \$469,100 from the GAL costs appropriation. Rather than lapsing these amounts to the general fund, the Courts requests that those amounts be transferred to the new appropriation.

3. INCREASED JUDICIAL COMPENSATION

GPR	\$4,422,100
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Request \$2,114,900 in 2013-14 and \$2,307,200 in 2014-15 for judicial compensation. According to the Director of State Courts Office, the request would result in a 6.54% increase to set judicial salaries "at a level comparable to the national average as of January 1, 2012, for trial court salaries." Under the request, Circuit Court judges' annual salaries would increase from \$128,600 to \$137,592. [See also summary items under "Supreme Court" and "Court of Appeals" for additional judicial compensation increase requests.]

4. INCREASE SMALL CLAIMS COMMENCEMENT FEE

Request modification of statutory language to increase the fee to commence a small claims action from \$22 to \$41.80 for small claims whose jurisdictional limit is between \$5,000 and \$9,999. Specify that of the \$41.80 fee, \$30 be retained by counties.

Under current law, the fee for commencement of a civil action is \$75 with \$30 of that amount retained by counties. The fee for commencement of a small claim is \$22, with \$10.20 retained by counties. Under 2011 Act 32, the threshold for small claims actions increased from actions of less than \$5,000 to actions of less than \$10,000. As a result, actions previously filed as civil actions now may be filed as small claims actions. The Director of State Courts Office estimates that the increased fee would generate an additional \$243,500 annually which would be wholly retained by the counties.

**5. REIMBURSEMENT OF OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL FOR COURT WITNESS
AND COURT INTERPRETERS**

Request statutory language modifications to allow reimbursement for court interpreters' out-of-state travel from their residence to the Wisconsin border to a maximum of 100 miles. The Director of State Courts Office assumes that the additional costs will be minimal and can be absorbed within current funding levels.

Under current law, reimbursement is authorized for traveling, going and returning from his or her residence if within the state, or if without the state, from the point where he or she crosses the state boundary to the place of attendance, and returning by the usually traveled route between such points, the mileage rate set by the compensation plan. Under the bill, the mileage rate would still be set by the compensation plan.